

# HOT AIR

## How Kamala Harris became a liability

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Yet even the greater responsibilities seem to chafe. From the beginning of her term in office, Harris bristled at being given the difficult job by Biden of addressing illegal immigration at the US-Mexico border. She insisted that she would only deal with the “root causes” of the problem. She spent months resisting intense pressure, first from Republicans and then from the media, to visit the border early on in her vice-presidency. When she eventually went to Guatemala in June 2021, her message to migrants was merely a bald: “Do not come.”

“She has done a lot to try to make people forget she was ever involved in the issue,” said David Bier, an associate director of immigration studies at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank based in Washington DC. “Her strategy has been to distance herself from it rather than to embrace it and come up with a message that would resonate with people. You get the sense that she has given up.”

Last summer in Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, the talk at dinner parties frequented by the political elite was often about how to help Harris out of the mire. Her staff were already leaving at a vertiginous rate. Today, those anxious questions from supporters of how they can help the vice-president have given way to silence and eye-rolls.

“No vice-president since Dan Quayle has made less of an impact in their first year of office than Harris,” said a veteran of Democratic political campaigns. “We are now at the point that you can talk about politics for hours without her name coming up.”